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David Rees AM
Chair, External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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19th February 2019

Dear Mr. Rees,

Thank you for your letter of 1st February regarding the amendment to the House of Lord's committee motion tabled by Baroness Smith of Basildon and the role of the devolved legislatures in future free trade agreements.

I understand your concern for the role of devolved legislatures in future trade negotiations and welcome your letter setting out your position.

The UK Government is committed to ensuring that future trade agreements deliver for all parts of the United Kingdom and draw on the expertise of each of the devolved nations. That is why we recently committed to establishing a new intergovernmental Ministerial Forum to provide a formal mechanism for Devolved Government Ministers to discuss and provide input to future trade negotiation.

It will be a matter for the National Assembly to consider appropriate arrangements for the Assembly to scrutinise the role of the Welsh Government in future trade agreements whilst of course the UK Government is accountable to the UK Parliament in Westminster.

I know that Minister Hollingbery was pleased to attend the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee and discuss the Trade Bill. I am gratified to see that the Welsh Government has now laid a supplementary LCM recommending consent to the bill, reflecting the work we have done to address their concerns. I look forward to seeing your full report on this role of devolved legislatures in future trade agreements in due course.

I am copying this letter to Lord Boswell, Baroness Taylor, Baroness Morgan of Ely and Baroness Smith of Basildon.

Baroness Fairhead

Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion
Department for International Trade